

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers

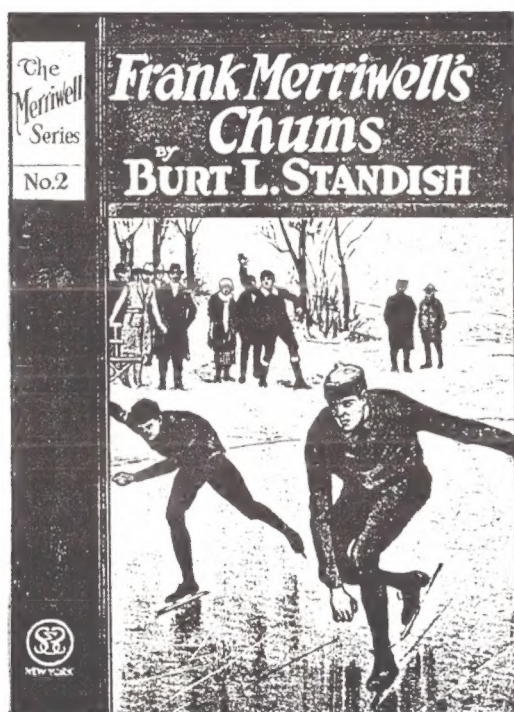
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LOUISA MAY ALCOTT & FRANK M. LUPTON

By Madeleine B. Stern



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MERRIWELL SERIES

Publisher: Street & Smith, New York. Issues: 245. Dates: January, 1921, to June, 1930. Schedule: Bi-weekly. Pages: 250-300. Size: 7 x 5". Price: 15¢. (For the first few issues the price was 20¢. When the price was lowered to 15¢ these earlier issues reverted back to 15¢.) Illustrations: Colored pictorial cover. Contents: A reprinting of the Merriwell stories from *Tip Top Weekly*.

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT & FRANK M. LUPTON

By Madeleine B. Stern

It is something of a literary shock to realize that the author of *LITTLE WOMEN* who played the role of youth's companion to generations of readers also deserves a place in the history of the dime novel.

In 1867, a year before publication of her masterpiece, Louisa May Alcott submitted to the Boston firm of Elliott, Thomes and Talbot two sensational concoctions. *THE SKELETON IN THE CLOSET* is a pageturner in which the heroine, a kind of involuntary femme fatale, lives in seclusion guarding her secret, the curse of hereditary madness. *THE MYSTERIOUS KEY*, an amalgam of feigned sleepwalking, a touch of bigamy, and a silver key that opens a grisly tomb, is a suspenseful fabric of Gothic devices. Both narratives were published by Elliott, Thomes and Talbot in their Ten Cent Novelettes series of Standard American Authors, *SKELETON* in No. 49 as a trailer to Perley Parker's *THE FOUNDLING*, and *THE MYSTERIOUS KEY* on its own as No. 50.¹

What Louisa Alcott could not know, since the events occurred after her death, is that both these narratives were republished by the New York firm of cheap publishers, F. M. Lupton. Moreover, Lupton did not confine his Alcott publications to sensational narratives. At least six Alcott titles, in various genres, can be traced to him, all between 1900 and 1906, when he headed one of the largest cheap reprint establishments.

Alcott, just beginning her literary career, had two published stories to her credit when Frank Moore Lupton was born in 1854 to a comfortable and well established family in Mattituck, Long Island, New York. By the time he was apprenticed, at age 15, to the printer of the *Suffolk Weekly Times* in Greenport, she had published *LITTLE WOMEN*. The next year he was employed in the printing company of S. W. Green in New York City, and in 1875, when Alcott had become nationally known, Lupton published a monthly journal, *Cricket on the Hearth*. During the 1880s, when Alcott, weary and ill, was struggling to complete the last volume of her March family saga, *JO'S BOYS*, Lupton came into his own. Founder of the F. M. Lupton Publishing Company, he launched the *People's Home Journal* and *Good Literature*, repositories for serial fiction. In addition, he was owner of William J. Brown & Company, a printing and binding house, and part owner of the Manhattan Typesetting Company. Thus he was expert in many phases of book manufacture — printing, typesetting, binding, periodicals, and especially publishing.²

Between the 1880s and his death in 1910, Lupton expanded his publishing concern until it could boast some 1500 paper-covered titles and an extensive list of series: the *Leisure Hour*, the *Idle Hour*, the *Bijou*, the *Acme*, the *Windsor*, the *Golden Rod*, the *Elite*, the *Aldis*, the *Southworth*, and the *Violet*. With the aid of his manager, J. M. Ruston, he issued hundreds of paper-bound and cloth-bound books including the *Boys' Own Library*, the *Girls' Popular Library*, the *Jack Harkaway Library*, and the *Mary J. Holmes Series*. He was part of the revolution in publishing that brought to the masses books cheaply produced and cheaply priced. Located successively on Murray Street, Reade Street, Duane Street, and finally City Hall Place, New York, in the Lupton Building, the F. M. Lupton Publishing Company — its name changed in 1903 to the Federal Book

Company — was a giant supplier of cheap books for mass entertainment.

The books offered by Lupton were for the most part not original publications but reprints of the tried and tested, writings of authors many of whom were deceased. Thus the publisher eliminated the need for author contracts and advance payments. His risks were few, and by 1904 he could boast, "The number and variety of Books published by us have increased to such an extent that we have been obliged to issue A Separate Catalogue of Paper Covered Books (containing over 1500 Titles) Which we shall be pleased to mail upon application."³

One of the authors in Lupton's stable was the creator of LITTLE WOMEN who, revered as the Children's Friend, had died in 1888. The publisher had an interest in at least six Alcott titles. He obtained some of them, as he obtained much of his list, from a colorful personality, a jack of all trades relating to publishing who also became an effective agent in the distribution of books for mass consumption.

Tall, dark, slender, William James Benners, Jr., encompassed many lives in one, all of them touching upon some phase of the publishing business.⁴ Born in Philadelphia in 1863, he became poet, traveler, writer, editor, literary agent, aficionado of pseudonyms, collector and historian of the dime novel. Indeed his interest in dime novels began when he was eight and continued all his life. He not only read and collected them; he added to the literature.

Among the narratives traced to him are such delectable titles as: CURSE OF THE OPALS, THE RAJAH'S JEWELS, MAGDALENE'S MYSTERY, and THE QUEST OF THE GOLDEN SKULL. Moreover, Benners adopted several pseudonyms for his stories, Eric Braddon, Wyne Winters, and the already familiar pen-name of Bertha M. Clay previously used by Charlotte M. Brame. Benners's expertise in pseudonyma extended to the detection of frauds in publishing — an investigation for which he was employed by such mass oriented houses as Street & Smith and George Munro's Sons.

Benners could change his literary caps with ease. As an agent, he traveled abroad and "made the personal acquaintance of a number of the most celebrated English authors" from whom he purchased the American rights to their narratives. His familiarity with the tribe of writers was perhaps even greater among those deceased. Benners not only knew "every story published by many writers," but collected files of their appearances in popular story papers such as the *New York Ledger*, *New York Weekly*, *Fireside Companion*, and the *Chimney Corner*. Those files were originally intended for use in the preparation of a comprehensive history of the dime novel and an encyclopedia of popular writers — projects never completed.

From the empire founded by the New York publishing magnate Frank Leslie, Benners acquired in 1902 reprint rights to several juvenile periodicals along with certain serials from *Frank Leslie's Chimney Corner* which he sold in turn to the Maine publisher William H. Gannett. There is no doubt that Benners was an operator. Many of the stories he amassed, along with publishing rights to the serials, he sold to Street & Smith, Norman L. Munro — and Frank Moore Lupton.

By his own admission, Frank Lupton did business with Benners "for years." A small collection of their correspondence in 1904 and 1906 reveals much of their methods and trade relations.⁵ In addition, it indicates that that prolific writer whose pen made her the family breadwinner was posthumously involved in the exchanges between a literary operator who was selling and a publisher of cheap books who was buying.

On January 11, 1904, William J. Benners, writing from Hicks Street in Philadelphia to Frank M. Lupton at City Hall Place, New York, announced that he was "sending...by express" a number of "manuscripts." The price

list that followed cited 27 titles by Charlotte M. Brame, including one that "has a perplexing mystery,...is full of love and is written in Mrs. Brame's best vein." Among other stories and serials appear the following:

THE BELLE OF SANTIAGO	By Louisa Alcott	10.00 net
LOST IN A PYRAMID	By Louisa Alcott	10.00 "

Once Lupton had examined "the large amount of material submitted," he hastened to reply on February 23, to his supplier whom he chastised on several counts. "It is not a pleasant thing," he wrote, "to find that a man with whom I have been dealing for years, to whom I have paid considerable sums of money, will make a deliberate attempt to impose upon and injure me." Benners, Lupton alleged, had sent him one story that he—Lupton—had already refused and another that he had previously purchased from Benners; one story was under copyright to Street & Smith and another was already in Lupton's *Arm Chair Library*. After citing his objections, Lupton settled upon 11 stories he would be willing to purchase, "provided you will reduce the prices to such figures as the material is worth." Among the items were THE BELLE OF SANTIAGO and LOST IN A PYRAMID.

Two years later, on March 26, 1906, Lupton again wrote to Benners requesting four stories, one of which was by Louisa M. Alcott, "and if after I see them I want the lot for \$50.00,...I will send you a check." On April 2 Lupton enclosed his check in that amount and, in a brief note, named the Alcott story included in the purchase—THE SKELETON IN THE CLOSET. And so, to the known canon of Alcott tales published by Lupton these extant letters add three possible titles: THE BELLE OF SANTIAGO; LOST IN A PYRAMID; and THE SKELETON IN THE CLOSET.

Earlier, around 1900, F. M. Lupton had reprinted as No. 38 in his *Leisure Hour Library* Louisa May Alcott's narrative, THE MYSTERIOUS KEY, which had made its initial appearance as an Elliott, Thomes and Talbot dime novel over 30 years before. Out of copyright, it was an eminently suitable title for the *Leisure Hour Series* whose books, originally priced at 5¢ each, were subsequently reduced to 2¢. The next two Lupton Alcotts appeared in the publisher's *Chimney Corner Series*: MOODS as No. 162 around 1900, and FLOWER FABLES as No. 185 around 1901. Both books, listed at 25¢ each, were later reduced to 10¢. Both were cheaply printed quarto paperbacks, two columns to a page, with pictorial covers.

Thus, for the Alcott items in his *Chimney Corner Series* the astute publisher had selected Alcott's first novel, MOODS, and her first published book, FLOWER FABLES. Like THE MYSTERIOUS KEY, both were out of copyright. Alcott had embarked upon her first experiment in the novel, MOODS, in August, 1860, when she was 27. In it, she wrote, "I've freed my mind upon a subject that always makes trouble, namely, Love." The result was a kind of fictional disquisition on wrong marriages, "unmated pairs trying to live their legal life decorously to the end at any cost."⁶ Published late in 1864 by Aaron K. Loring of Boston, the book never quite satisfied the author who years later wrote a revised version published in 1882 by Roberts Brothers. It was not the revision but the original 1864 MOODS now out of copyright that Lupton reprinted, the version ending with the heroine's death. To enlarge his edition to the usual 128 pages, Lupton added two stories by H. Rider Haggard, "A Tale of Three Lions," and "The Wreck of the *Copeland*," tacked on his CATALOGUE OF BOOKS, and published the paperback with its pictorial cover in his *Chimney Corner Series*.

About a year later, in 1901, Lupton turned to Alcott's first published book, FLOWER FABLES, a series of romantic fables about flowers which she had composed in her teens.⁷ Published in December, 1854, by George Briggs of Boston, it provided F. M. Lupton nearly half a century later with another of his *Chimney Corner* paperbacks. Illustrated and en-

larged with three other Alcott stories: "The Autobiography of an Omnibus," "Roses and Forget-Me-Nots," and "Helping Along," all originally published in *St. Nicholas*, along with Ian Maclaren's "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush, and Other Stories," the volume ended with Lupton's Catalogue and Price List of Paper Covered Books. That Catalogue now listed three Alcott titles at reduced prices: MOODS, FLOWER FABLES, and THE MYSTERIOUS KEY.

In addition to those three, Lupton apparently increased his Alcott list a few years later with three purchases from William James Benners, Jr.: THE SKELETON IN THE CLOSET in the same sensational genre as THE MYSTERIOUS KEY; LOST IN A PYRAMID; and THE BELLE OF SANTIAGO.

Louisa May Alcott had been in the habit of listing the titles of her stories and the fees paid for them in her yearly notes and memoranda. For 1869 her earnings included \$228 for LITTLE WOMEN Vol. I, \$250 for LITTLE WOMEN Vol. II, and \$25 for Mummy.⁸ A narrative entitled "Lost in a Pyramid; or, The Mummy's Curse," may be found in the first issue of *The New World*, a periodical launched on January 16, 1869, by the dynamic New York publisher Frank Leslie. After only six months, *The New World* was merged with *Frank Leslie's Chimney Corner*,⁹ that family paper from which William James Benners, Jr., apparently acquired some serial rights. Having made its bow in 1869 in a Leslie story paper, Alcott's "Mummy," via a Benners transaction, joined the extensive holdings of Frank M. Lupton.

THE BELLE OF SANTIAGO, acquired by Lupton at the same time as LOST IN A PYRAMID, is less easily traced. There is no mention of that title or of any comparable title in Alcott's journals, letters, or notes and memoranda. Is it possible that William J. Benners, Jr., that expert in literary pseudonyma who did not hesitate to appropriate the pseudonym Bertha M. Clay previously adopted by Charlotte M. Brame—is it possible that Benners was the author of THE BELLE OF SANTIAGO, cloaking his secret under a name-turned-pseudonym—Louisa M. Alcott!?

The real Louisa M. Alcott has almost as firm a place in the history of sensation stories and cheap reprints as she has in the annals of juvenile literature. Had she survived into the 20th century, the fact would probably not have surprised her.

Lupton himself died in 1910, a suicide because of ill health, and at his death he was described as "head of a big publishing house at 23 City Hall Place, Manhattan."¹⁰

Benners survived Lupton by thirty years, continuing his pursuit of literature and sub-literature, and continuing to earn the title of "the world's greatest authority on old story papers and their writers."¹¹

The writer who had earned quite a different title—that of America's best-loved author of juveniles—also played a role in a revolution that provided cheap books for the millions. Benners and Lupton were both agents in the conversion of popular literature into mass merchandise, and in that conversion Louisa May Alcott became a profitable commodity.

NOTES

¹ THE MYSTERIOUS KEY, AND WHAT IT OPENED was most recently reprinted in BEHIND A MASK: THE UNKNOWN THRILLERS OF LOUISA MAY ALCOTT, edited by Madeleine Stern (New York: William Morrow, 1975); THE SKELETON IN THE CLOSET was most recently reprinted in PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS: MORE UNKNOWN THRILLERS OF LOUISA MAY ALCOTT, edited by Madeleine Stern (New York: William Morrow, 1976).

² For Frank M. Lupton and his firm, see Frank Luther Mott, A HISTORY OF AMERICAN MAGAZINES 1885-1905 (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957) p. 366; *New York Times*, October 7, 1910, p. 5; PUBLISHERS

TRADE LIST ANNUAL, 1901 and 1904; Madeleine B. Stern, editor, PUBLISHERS FOR MASS ENTERTAINMENT IN NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980) pp. 215-219 (Chapter on F. M. Lupton Publishing Company, by Marie Olesen Urbanski, to whom the writer is grateful for additional information). The writer is also, as usual, deeply indebted to Victor A. Berch who brought to her attention two Lupton imprints.

³ PUBLISHERS TRADE LIST ANNUAL, 1904.

⁴ For William James Benners, Jr., see the articles on him in *Dime Novel Roundup*, July, 1940; August, 1941; and especially those by Ralph Adimari in issues of September 15, 1958, and February 15, 1959. The writer is deeply indebted to Edward T. LeBlanc for copies of those issues.

⁵ The letters cited are deposited in Fales Library, Elmer Holmes Bobst Library, New York University, and the writer is most grateful to Frank Walker for permission to quote from them.

⁶ For MOODS, see LOUISA MAY ALCOTT: SELECTED FICTION, edited by Daniel Shealy, Madeleine B. Stern, and Joel Myerson (Boston: Little, Brown, 1991) pp. xxi-xxii.

⁷ For FLOWER FABLES, see ALCOTT: SELECTED FICTION, pp. xiii-xiv.

⁸ THE JOURNALS OF LOUISA MAY ALCOTT, edited by Joel Myerson, Daniel Shealy, Madeleine B. Stern (Boston: Little, Brown, 1989) p. 172.

⁹ Madeleine B. Stern, PURPLE PASSAGE: THE LIFE OF MRS. FRANK LESLIE (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970) p. 191.

¹⁰ *New York Times*, October 7, 1910, p. 5.

¹¹ *Dime Novel Roundup*, September 15, 1958, p. 124.

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"EVERY GIRLS' AMBITION" CAREERS IN GIRLS' SERIES FICTION, 1940-1970

By Kathleen Reuter Chamberlain

My mother has carefully preserved a dittoed school handout that asks the timeless question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" In the space left for an answer, I had laboriously printed in my six-year-old hand, "a librarian or a chorus [spelled 'coris'] girl." Since no woman in my family had ever been anything more exotic than a secretary or telephone operator, I can't imagine where I learned that "chorus girl" represented a career option for females.

Still, this childish ambition is similar to many young girls' dreams of having exciting careers. And as you might imagine, the publishers and authors of children's popular series books haven't overlooked the money-making potential of such yearnings. (By "popular series books," I mean those mass-produced, inexpensive, often ghost-written stories that survive today in such indestructible series as the HARDY BOYS and NANCY DREW. I don't include such series as the LITTLE HOUSE books or even SUE BARTON, since these sorts of series were not mass-produced and usually were approved by librarians.) Even before World War II, when women's career opportunities were much more severely limited than they are today, publishers provided series about "career girls." For example, THE MOTION PICTURE GIRLS work in films, as does Ruth Fielding, who breaks into movies as a "scenario writer" in the 1910s and rises to great heights in the industry by the time her series ends in 1932. In another 1920s series,

THE BLYTHE GIRLS, Rose Blythe and her sister Margy become a shop clerk and a personal secretary, respectively, each gaining prestige and admiration for her quick wits and dedication. Overall, pre-World War II series feature a fair number of teachers, journalists, "wholesome" actresses, and at least one tea-shop entrepreneur.

But during and after World War II, the "career girls" really come into their own as series heroines. As more women worked in war-related industries, more series books exploited the patriotic and economic value of these occupations, especially the useful and womanly career of nursing. During the war, we find the following career series: SALLY SCOTT OF THE WAVES; CHERRY AMES, nurse; PENNY MARSH, nurse; NANCY NAYLOR, flying nurse; NANCY DALE, Army Nurse; ANN BARTLETT, Navy Nurse; and more. After the war, some of these career series continued, minus the war effort, and new series were begun. The CHERRY AMES nurse series was joined by the JEAN CRAIG, the NANCY KIMBALL, and KATHY MARTIN Nurse stories. Other post-war career books included the VICKI BARR flight stewardess series, the PEGGY LANE theatre stories, the CONNIE BLAIR advertising agency books, and the BEVERLY GRAY reporter series (a continuation of the 1930s BEVERLY GRAY "college girl" series). The books' jackets tout the glamour and excitement of the heroines' lives. "It is every girls' ambition at one time or another to wear the crisp white uniform of a nurse," says the blurb on the CHERRY AMES books. Other series also lure readers with enticing invitations: "Fly to adventure with Vicki Barr, the popular heroine of a brand new series of exciting stories for girls"; "Follow Connie Blair into the glamorous world of advertising," says another. On the surface, at least, the series accept and promote the idea that careers for women are possible and even desirable.

But is the "message" of these series really quite so simple or straightforward? Exactly what do these widely-read books tell their young readers about women and careers? My research has shown that the series do in fact suggest that girls can and should look to careers for fulfillment—within certain limits. These limits are significant, however: most of the books take pains to assure readers that career women will not lose their all-important "femininity"; most imply that girls and women should ultimately turn to men for protection; most suggest that careers and marriage are mutually exclusive; and most suggest that girls ought to focus on certain approved female careers such as nursing and modeling.

Some of these restrictions make sense, given the audience of the books—girls aged eleven to sixteen—that scary adolescent period when independence seems both thrilling and frightening. The series heroines have much more independence than most of their real-life counterparts, but the books mitigate the fear such freedom may create by providing the heroines with protectors in the form of motherly, understanding head nurses and housekeepers; or sophisticated, understanding young female executives and supervisors; or protective, strong, and understanding young male co-workers. The heroines may be on their own, but they are also surrounded by a supportive, reliable, older adult world of security and stability. Though the presence of protectors does limit the series' suggestions of female self-sufficiency, such boundaries are in keeping with the audience.

And this same audience is not really interested in the logistics of juggling marriage and career, even if the historical context in which the books were written would have encouraged such a concern. Romance and courtship rather than marriage capture the adolescent reader's imagination, and the series provide romance in abundance. We don't proceed many chapters into the first volume of any of these series without meeting

suitable young men. In CHERRY AMES, STUDENT NURSE, Cherry runs into handsome young intern Jim Clayton as soon as she steps out of the taxi on her first day at Spencer Nursing School. In Connie Blair's first adventure, THE CLUE IN BLUE, the chapter titled "Enter Larry Stewart" is Chapter Four. Peggy Lane and Vicki Barr met young and handsome directors and co-pilots, respectively, even before they are fully launched on their careers. The young men provide the heroines and readers the chance for starry-eyed daydreams and entrancing dinner dates, but the heroines always conclude that they are really in love with nursing, reporting, advertising, or flying, not with the "boys," though they never discount the possibility of something "serious" in the future. As Connie Blair says, "I'm not going to fall in love for years and years. I'm going to be a career gal, don't you know?" (THE CLUE IN BLUE 149) The boys also come in very handy when crooks are to be captured, since no series heroine of any stature fails to get involved in exciting mysteries as a fringe benefit of her job. Peggy Lane, for instance, is vastly relieved when her friend Randy Brewster insists that shadowing criminals is a man's job. Still, Peggy ends up doing the shadowing herself when necessary (PEGGY FINDS THE THEATER 153).

Thus for most of the series heroines, just as for most of their readers, marriage is only a blur on the horizon of the future and therefore receives little serious attention. Only occasionally will a series explicitly address marriage as an impediment to a career. In the VICKI BARR stories, for instance, Vicki learns that stewardesses are grounded by the airline if they marry, a practice that she and the other girls accept after only momentary surprise. Tessa, a student in the stewardess class, gasps "'Air stewardesses can't marry?...What is the airline thinking of?' 'Of business,' snapped another student, a reddish-haired girl" (SILVER WINGS FOR VICKI 53). None of the girls thinks to ask why business couldn't be carried on just as satisfactorily with married stewardesses; they focus instead on the redhaired girl's abrupt rudeness and wonder whether she'll be able to make a "tactful, gracious air hostess" (53).

In a way, the absence of marriage from the plots is not a limitation: the readers see portraits of young, smart, sophisticated women executives who find fulfillment without marriage, who are capable and successful without men. Connie Blair's Aunt Elizabeth Easton is described as having "the ineffable polish of a woman of fashion" (THE CLUE IN BLUE 2). As she watches her Aunt Bet at work, Connie realizes that "there was more to this business of being a stylist than met the casual eye" and that "Elizabeth Easton was an executive who had earned her present position" (THE CLUE IN BLUE 17; 18). Vicki Barr meets Ruth Benson, the decisive and efficient Superintendent of Stewardesses, who prides herself on never having picked a trainee who couldn't make the grade. Cherry Ames faces authoritative, capable female head nurses, superintendents, and instructors. None of these women is pitied for being unmarried; their careers clearly provide other sources of fulfillment (even though Connie does wish her aunt would find a promising "romance").

More serious, to me, than the issue of marriage in these series is the question of what careers are suitable for women. Here, the books rely heavily on gender stereotypes. For example, not once in the CHERRY AMES books, which were written between 1943 and 1968, does Cherry encounter a female doctor or a male nurse. In one early volume, the Superintendent of Nurses tells Cherry's nursing school class that "nursing is the most rewarding of all professions for women...and frequently the most romantic and exciting!" (CHERRY AMES, STUDENT NURSE 32). For readers, the implication is that only certain careers are open to women. (In the late 60s,

some books did begin to acknowledge the idea of women as doctors, but with reservations. In 1968, Helen Wells, the author of many of the CHERRY AMES books, wrote a non-series book for older adolescents called DOCTOR BETTY. Betty spends most of the volume convincing various prospective husbands that her being a doctor will *never* interfere with her duties as wife and mother. Betty listens in admiration as a male colleague proudly explains that his doctor wife stayed up half the night preparing for her small son's birthday party rather than allow someone else to handle such an obvious mother's duty.)

Other series are just as traditional in their presentation of careers open to women. Peggy Lane promises her parents that if she does not get an acting job in a year, she'll return to college to become a teacher. In her series (written in the 1960s), women are often successful actresses, but never technicians, art designers, directors, or playwrights. In PEGGY PLAYS OFF-BROADWAY, Peggy's actress colleague Amy doesn't get a part in a play written and directed by their male friends; she then cheerfully volunteers as an unpaid secretary and gopher. And female commercial pilots are never even mentioned in the VICKI BARR stories, though interestingly, women as amateur pilots are quite common in several series. In the CONNIE BLAIR stories, Connie starts out as a fashion model, then becomes a receptionist in an advertising agency.

The heroines are all young, of course, so it's not surprising that they don't achieve upper-echelon business status. But even the older women executives in the books are mostly stereotyped. Connie Blair's aunt might be an important member of management—but in a women's fashion store. Later, when Connie moves to the ad agency, she does meet one female business mogul—who owns a cosmetics company and who is frightfully dramatic and temperamental. Thus even a female corporation owner is depicted as a "typical" female in a typically women-oriented business (THE RIDDLE IN RED).

Granted, we can partly account for these gender stereotypes in terms of the audience and the historical context of the series. These books reflect the reality of the time in which they were written, when women doctors, pilots, and business tycoons were far more of a minority even than they are now. The series publishers obviously were not interested in reforming sex role stereotypes in the professions. They simply wanted to produce books that would appeal to adolescent girls. And just as obviously, the readers were interested in glamorous careers that could make exciting reading. Models, stewardesses, actresses, and nurses fit the bill well without requiring the readers to enter completely alien territory.

But these reasons, understandable though they are, do not erase the fact that these series sharply limit a reader's view of her career options. Even nurses, whose work can hardly be considered frivolous or marginal, are presented as mostly glorified assistants to men. And professions aren't the only gender stereotypes the series present, either. In A CLUE IN BLUE, for instance, Connie Blair realizes that a women's clothing store is a "woman's world"—only the floorwalkers, janitors, art department people, and of course, the owner, are men. Connie worries that in such a "women's world" gossip among the staff will be more prevalent and might destroy people's reputations through rumor alone—an idea that clearly suggests gossip as solely a female activity, one from which a male business is presumably free.

You might be wondering whether these books present any favorable attitudes toward women and careers. The answer is yes, and at the moment I think the favorable elements at least balance the unfavorable (I waver

on this point). One of the most important of the favorable attitudes is the books' insistence that girls ought to be, can be, and *are* responsible, capable, bright, and strong. Cherry Ames' superintendent of nurses says, "Let me remind you that [nurses] are going to need good health, intelligence, unselfishness, patience, tact, humor, sympathy, efficiency, neatness, plus plenty of energy for hard work" (CHERRY AMES, STUDENT NURSE 32). Vicki Barr's stewardess instructor warns, "Anyone who thinks being a stewardess is an easy, romantic job, go away! This isn't glamorous—this is hard work. This is the transportation *business*" (SILVER WINGS FOR VICKI 55). She tells them that they must learn flight routes, first aid, psychology, the principles of aerodynamics, *and* must read "eight specified national magazines per week" so as to "converse intelligently" with passengers. To qualify as a stewardess, each trainee must receive a minimum of 95% on her final exam—94% fails. Though many of the traits listed are traditionally feminine ones, such as sympathy, tact, and unselfishness, the stories never question that the heroines and their friends have or can develop all these capabilities as well as more intellectual ones. All the series constantly reminded the reader that these so-called "glamorous" careers demand hard work, effort, and ability (although, of course, the plots end up being just as glamorous and romantic as any girl's daydream.) The series also stress the need to prove oneself to oneself—each heroine at some point faces a crisis of career or character that she steadfastly faces and overcomes.

And the series contain throughout many offhand or matter-of-fact references to women's abilities. Such references are made without surprise on anyone's part; they are simply accepted as factual. Vicki Barr, we're told, "had never been fooled by the old prejudice that if you happened to be a girl you did not quite have good sense" (SILVER WINGS FOR VICKI 78). Vicki also quite looks forward to having her own money: she says "Imagine not having to ask Dad for things. Being master of my fate and captain of my own pocketbook" (SILVER WINGS 30). Cherry Ames "wanted a profession of her own [through which] to do vital work" (STUDENT NURSE 6). Though Connie Blair starts out as a receptionist at her advertising agency, she eventually goes to art school, wins promotions in the art department, and gets plum assignments to do on her own.

Interestingly, the Connie Blair stories sometimes address gender stereotypes outright. When Connie laughs at a male coworker's ambition to be a dress designer, he says indignantly, "Why is it that if girls find out a guy knows anything about clothes, they immediately think he's a sis?" After Connie uncovers a plot to smuggle antique jewels disguised as inexpensive ornaments on women's hats, the female store detective remarks, "It was a daring notion. But such is the disinterest of the average man in women's frippery that they [the criminals] got away with it." The implication here is that men are wrong to dismiss women's interests, such as fashion, out of hand. Though the narrator offers no overt comments on these remarks, they subtly show the reader the folly of making superficial judgments based on gender alone.

It's possible that the most important impact of these career series was not in promoting any specific career, but in the general notion that a girl (and eventually a woman) could gain satisfaction, confidence, and independence by doing "vital work," by doing it well, and by being "master [or perhaps mistress] of [her] own fate and captain of [her] own pocketbook." And, the books suggested that not only *could* she gain such qualities, but that she *should*. These series presented careers as viable, honorable, legitimate options to college or marriage (at least for a while). I don't know how many (if any) women became nurses, stewardesses,

or advertising artists because of Cherry, Vicki, or Connie, but I can at least speak from personal experience when I say that I can remember fully agreeing with Connie Blair: "I'm going to be a career gal, don't you know?"

* * * * *

AMERICAN DIME NOVEL REPRINTS IN EUROPE

By Edward T. LeBlanc

A French speaking American soldier was being entertained by a French national behind the lines in the Verdun sector during World War I. The invitation had been tendered through the American's ability to speak French. He was treated to cheese and wine, items not on an American soldier's bill of fare at the front. The Frenchman was very inquisitive and had many questions about life in America. "How do you manage to keep your scalp with all those hostile Indians roaming around?" was one of the questions asked. The conversation revealed that the Frenchman thought Indians were on the streets of New York and other cities lurking to attack the unwary. Where did such ideas come from? The hospitable Frenchman had been an avid reader of BUFFALO BILL dime novels which had had a wide distribution in France before the war, coloring his image of American life.

In 1907, A. Eichler of Dresden, Germany, made a contract with Street & Smith to translate and distribute their dime novels in Europe. *Buffalo Bill Stories* and *Nick Carter Weekly* were the two selected by Eichler for this treatment. These two series were translated into most of the European languages, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Hungarian, Polish, Scandinavian, and even Russian. Soon a whole gamut of series patterned on these two were on the market with such series titles as TEXAS JACK, SITTING BULL, MORGAN, THE PIRATE, NAT PINKERTON, and countless others. The NAT PINKERTON series even made its way into Turkey. Much of the popular concepts of American life were assimilated in this way, and the dream of migrating to America was nurtured. A German by the name of Pfaus migrated to the Southwest and earned the sobriquet "Arizona Jack". He returned to Germany a hero. After World War II which he survived he became a subscriber to the *Dime Novel Roundup*. He had managed to hang onto a few German language dime novels. This was no mean feat for Hitler had decreed that these along with other American oriented books were to be burned.

The reprinting of S&S *Buffalo Bill Stories* and *Nick Carter Weekly* ceased with the beginning of World War I in 1914, as well as those European series imitating them. There had been 394 *Buffalo Bill Stories* and 383 *Nick Carter Weeklies* published in French and probably a like amount in other languages. Between the wars there was a revival of similar publications, but no more direct reprintings from Street & Smith publications. BUFFALO BILL proved popular in most of the European countries especially in Italy, where he was still appearing in series well into the 1920s and possibly later. Westerns, other than BUFFALO BILL were also popular with series about BUCK TAYLOR, a real American cowboy whose adventures first appeared in *Beadles Dime Library*, and such fictitious characters as KANSAS JACK, DICK NORTON, BILLY JENKINS, and later TOM MIX.

Detectives with American sounding names were also popular, leading with ETHEL KING, THE FEMALE NICK CARTER, NAT PINKERTON, already mentioned, FRANK ALLAN, JACK FRANKLIN, WILLIAM MACBEY, HARRY DICKSON, and possibly a few more. There was one group of stories about RAFFLES-like characters. These included LORD LISTER, RICHEMERO, and LORD PERCY.

The illustrations were even more dramatic than their American counterparts. Even the reprintings from American covers were more vivid. Europeans were better craftsmen in the art of producing colorful covers.

A sampling can be seen in the dime novel histories published in Norway, Denmark, and Italy.

We have, up to this time not mentioned the British reprintings of American dime novels. Here no translation was necessary so it was rather easy to "pirate" stories from one another and this was certainly done, for from the earliest dime novels published by Beadle to the later Street & Smith and Frank Tousey publications. For some reason the Norman L. Munro and George Munro publications were overlooked, though a few *Old Sleuth Libraries* were used in England.

The British reprinted all of the Beadle publications, in many cases in better editions with colored covers. All of the DEADWOOD DICK stories appeared in England with colored covers as did the FRANK READE and JACK WRIGHT invention stories. Most were edited to fit the number of pages allotted. Aldine in their *Buffalo Bill Library* published original stories as well as edited reprints of S&S stories. In some cases S&S reprinted the British stories in their *Buffalo Bill Stories*. (Talk of carrying coal to Newcastle!) Both the American publishers and the British publishers borrowed with or without permission. Attempting to identify these reprintings is like trying to penetrate a maze without a path to the center. Titles were changed, no authors were given and the stories edited to fit, in some cases, into half the number of pages originally used. It is a wonder that they sold at all. The British youngster must have been an avid reader to put up with such shenanigans. Most of the *Beadles Dime* and *Half Dime Libraries* were reprinted in this way by Aldine in their *Cheerful Library* and *Half Holiday Libraries* which ran to 800 or so numbers each.

I have discussed Mr. Pfaus earlier, but would like now to discuss two other foreign collectors with whom I was personally acquainted, Mr. George Fronval and Mr. Denis Rogers. George Fronval was a Parisian newspaper man whose beat was interviewing visiting celebrities. During the 1920s and 30s his column featured American and European actors and actresses, radio personalities, etc. He fought in the French Army during World War II and was captured by the Germans and spent a good part of the war as a POW. He was a collector of the French dime novels and had acquired complete sets of most of the French publications. His entrancement with the American west, especially with Buffalo Bill caused him to look further afield for material to collect. He corresponded with many Indian personages in the U.S. and in 1960 his dream of coming to the U.S. came true. He visited at my home and stayed a few days. He then headed west where he interviewed some Indian chiefs in Oklahoma and visited Indian reservations in South Dakota where he recorded Indian music and dances during their festivals. On his way back home he stopped in on me again and played back some of his tapes. He gathered enough information to write a number of books on the West which were published in France. Through the *Roundup* he became acquainted with Denis Rogers and visited him in London and went on book hunting expeditions. The contrast in the character of these two would make them unlikely companions, but collecting dime novels made them compatible. Denis was the typical reserved Englishman who could rummage in a book store and if nothing was found to buy would leave and the owner would not have known he had been there. George on the other hand could not pass in front of a book store without everyone within a block knowing that he had been there. Denis described an incident while book searching in London. A Buffalo Bill poster was displayed in the window of one book shop. George had to have it, and after much negotiating, with much hand waving and rather loud language made a deal and bought it. All this time Denis was wondering whether he should admit

that they had come in together and find some way to escape. Finally there was the problem of managing the poster which was rather large through the London Underground to the boat train. Although Denis in recounting the story said he enjoyed every bit of it, I believe he was glad when the train pulled out. George visited the States two or three times and always stopped in and talked dime novels and Buffalo Bill. We talked late into the night. Included in the visit was taking him out to dinner. We usually selected a good restaurant where there was a wine list. This never satisfied George. He wanted to see the wine cellar and make his choice there. The first time he did this made me cringe, but the second time I went along and helped him pick, not that I could contribute anything to his win selection.

Denis Rogers, of course was a frequent visitor, and we spent many days at the Library of Congress researching Edward S. Ellis, his prime collecting target. We visited numerous university libraries including Harvard, Yale, University of Minnesota, New York University at Albany, and others. His was a never ending search. He attended one of our conferences, the one held at Louisville. He intended to attend others but died of a heart attack before the next one was held. His Ellis collection was willed to the University of Minnesota where it is in the capable hands of Mrs. Hoyle and Didi Johnson.

In closing, I believe American dime novels helped depict the American way of life, especially the historical west to Europeans in such a way as to foster immigration to the U.S. A more thorough study on this influence should be the subject of some younger person's paper at some future time. The published dime novel histories of Norway, Denmark, and Italy would make a good start, but a knowledge of the languages or a translation would be necessary.

* * * * *

WHY ALGER COULD STILL BE THE AUTHOR OF "I'M OLD TODAY." A Further Bibliographical Note.

By Victor A. Berch

Some years ago, my colleague, Professor Gary Scharnhorst, presented his reason, which at that time he thought valid, for negating the idea that Horatio Alger, Jr., was the author of the anonymous poem "I'm Old Today" as listed in other Alger bibliographies.¹

The thrust of his argument was based on the supposition that Alger had not yet begun to contribute to the periodical *Student and Schoolmate* where this poem was claimed to have appeared for the first time and was also claimed to have been Alger's first contribution to that periodical.

However, in the course of my own research, I have located two printings of the poem, albeit still anonymous, which appeared prior to its publication in *Student and Schoolmate*. The first printing of the poem which I located appeared in the *Christian Register* of December 15, 1855. This was at a time when Horatio Alger's poetry had already been turning up in the *Christian Register*.² The next appearance of the poem which I located appeared once again in the *Christian Register* of August 15, 1863, shortly before its appearance in the November issue of *Student and Schoolmate* of the same year.

It should be noted, however, that both appearances of this poem in the *Christian Register* did not carry the legend "For The Register" or "For The Christian Register" as was the usual policy with original contributions. It could be that the original appearance of the poem remains to be found in a hitherto unlocated issue of some periodical or newspaper.

Litten may claim that Steve is engaged in ordinary civilian flying, but who among us doesn't believe that's just a cover? I know that I, for one, feel good just knowing that Steve Ames and JANIG are out there flying and fighting for truth, justice, and the American something-or-other. And I feel even better knowing that secret groups such as JANIG can never become too secret as long as THE DIME NOVEL ROUNDUP is on the look-out.

Katheleen Chamberlain
Box 116
Emory, VA 24327

* * *

Your publication is my only link with my golden boyhood—and the fact that I read my first Horatio Alger at the age of 10. Now that I am 81, I can look back on 71 years of happiness and one of the salient features contributing toward that happiness is the monthly arrival of THE DIME NOVEL ROUNDUP.

Frederick Fell
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Hollywood, FL 33020

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A DIME NOVEL COLLECTOR'S BOOK SHELF

BASEBALL BY THE BOOKS. A History and Complete Bibliography of Baseball Fiction, by Andy McCue. Wm. C. Brown, Publisher, 25 Kessel Court, Suite 201, Madison, WI 53711. Excellent research work. Contains a list of most dime novels featuring baseball, the stories of the Merriwells, Fred Fearnot, Jack Lightfoot, Frank Manley, Jack Standfast, Dick Daresome, the Three Chums; all are here. A must for dime novel collectors and baseball historians.

* * * * *

FRANK MERRIWELL ON THE AIR

Dr. Fred L. King of Moberly, Missouri, sent in a tape of a radio program, INFORMATION PLEASE, for November 29, 1938. INFORMATION PLEASE had a panel of experts answering questions sent in by the audience. Of interest in this particular program was that one set of questions was about the Merriwells. The panel failed on three of the four questions.

1. Where did the Merriwells go to college? Yale
 2. What was Frank's girl friend's name? Inza Burrage
 3. Who was the aboriginal friend of the Merriwells? Joe Crowfoot
 4. What was Frank's famous baseball pitch? The Double Shoot
- The panel missed all but the first question.

* * * * *

OF DIME NOVEL INTEREST

THE AMBIVALENT IMAGE. Nineteenth Century America's Perception of the Jew, by Louise A. Mayo. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, Rutherford, NJ, 1988. Chapter 3, "Popular Images," deals in part with how the Jew was perceived in dime novels. Authors discussed are Sylvanus Cobb, Jr., Edward "Ned Buntline" Judson, and Albert Aiken.

* * * * *



FRANCIS WORCESTER DOUGHTY

A RETROSPECTIVE

Mr. Doughty was born in Brooklyn, Long Island, New York, November 5, 1850. He began when still quite a boy to write short stories, some of which were published in the weekly story papers of that period. During the '70s he began writing for Frank Tousey in his spare moments, being at that time a traveling salesman. These stories were so successful that in 1882 he decided to devote his whole time to authorship, and from that time until his death on November 1, 1917, he continued to send in his writings to the Tousey publishing house. He was an indefatigable worker, writing literally night and day, and turned out a lengthy number of stories of mystery and adventure of the then popular type. Like most of Tousey's writers, he used various pen names. He originated the character of Old King Brady, and nearly all of the stories in the SECRET SERVICE series were his; 160 of the final stories being written by Mr. Lou Senarens. Mr. Doughty wrote for *Young Men of New York*, *Boys of New York*, *Happy Days*, and other periodicals. Some of the titles of his stories were, THE TEN DOCTORS, YOUNG MONTE CRISTO, THE BLACK BOX, OLD KING BRADY, THE DETECTIVE, THE HAUNTED TOLL-GATE, and in *Happy Days* such serial stories as "The Klondike Boys," "Bob Rollstone," "Two Boys From Nowhere," "Captain Thunder," "The Boy From Tombstone," "Dick The Half Breed," "The Cape Nome Boys," "The King of Cripple Creek," "The Big Blue Diamond," "Owls of The Owl House," "Old Blinker," "Left Behind at Hangtown," etc., etc., too numerous to mention. He was a great reader, and interested in many subjects. He possessed a fine collection of old coins and was a member of the American Numismatic and Archaeological Society. He was fond of gems, and especially enjoyed collecting the semi-precious stones such as the garnet, agate, etc. Likewise he owned a wonderful collection of valuable stamps, as well as a fine collection of old books, from which he extracted many of the curious items to be found in the "Knowledge Corner" of *Happy Days*. All manners of antiquities were fascinating to him. Even with all these varied interests he made it a point to find time to work in his garden. During the last years of his life his health failed considerably, so that

Contributed by
Gilbert K. Westgard II.



DON BRIGGS
WAS HURT SIX
DIFFERENT TIMES
DURING THE
FILMING OF
'ADVENTURES OF
FRANK MERRIWELL'.
(HIS FATHER IS A WELL-KNOWN
CHICAGO SURGEON).

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while he wrote sparingly he gave much of his time to raising vegetables. At that time he was residing in a picturesque old Dutch house in Cresskill, New Jersey.

About two years before his death he was much surprised to receive an offer from a film company about to produce ZUDORA, OR THE TWENTY MILLION DOLLAR MYSTERY. Being dissatisfied with their own scenario of this story they suggested that the author of the character of Old King Brady was the man to help them out. Mr. Doughty had never taken much interest in the movies, and never had thought of writing for them, but this unexpected offer aroused his old time energy and he succeeded in producing a number of scenarios, which were screened under the direction of the late Howard Hensel, and proved to be an overwhelming success. After this his power to produce satisfactory work failed, although he continued his efforts almost to the day of his death. He left a wife and a married son, and many friends who all still remember him with grateful affection.

Contributed by E. M. Sanchez-Saavedra.

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